

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2107

May 24, 2004

The Honorable Tom Ridge
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

An investigative report conducted by CBS 4 Boston recently uncovered a disturbing security weakness at Boston's Logan Airport. According to this report, commercial vehicles driven by contractors hired by Massport, the authority responsible for operations at Logan, which were entering the airport perimeter to perform a repaving project, were not being physically inspected. Specifically, neither the drivers' identification documents, nor the vehicles themselves, were being routinely inspected prior to entry onto the airport grounds. I am enclosing a copy of the broadcast for your review.

As a result of the CBS 4 investigation, Massport has announced a modification to its security policies. A statement from Massport released on May 21, 2004 described these modifications as follows: "All construction drivers and their vehicles - including those accompanied by security escorts - will now undergo enhanced personal and vehicle ID inspections."

I am concerned that Massport's recent security enhancements in the area of vehicle inspection and commercial driver identity verification may not be incorporated in the airport security plans submitted for the Department's approval both by Massport and by airport authorities around the country. As you know, as a member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, I have introduced legislation to close dangerous aviation security loopholes. Failure to require physical vehicle inspection and driver identity verification for all commercial vehicles operated by contractors that penetrate secure areas of airports is a glaring security loophole that should be immediately closed nationwide - not merely at a handful of airports.

I call on the Department to immediately make its approval of airports' security plans contingent upon airport operator compliance with 100% vehicle inspection and operator identity verification for all airport contractors prior to entry into secure areas of airports. This requirement should apply not only to future airport security plans, but also should be applied retroactively.

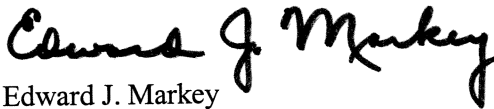
Massport's announced change in its security procedures raises questions about the Department's process for institutionalizing, on a nationwide basis, such strengthening measures:

1. Has the Department been informed of the specific security "enhancements" envisioned by Massport?
2. Is it your understanding that *every* commercial vehicle operated by *every* Massport contractor with access to secure areas of the airport will be subjected to physical checks - i.e., inspection of the vehicle and positive verification of the driver's identity - or will only certain vehicles and drivers on particular construction projects submit to Massport's enhanced security measures?
3. Will the enhancements be enshrined in Massport's security plan on file with the Department? Will an amended plan be produced by Massport and approved by the Department that reflects the modifications? If not, why not?

I urge the Department to direct Massport to develop and submit to the Department an amended security plan that codifies its new vehicle inspection policy and incorporates it into the airport's overall security plan. I request a copy of this plan; due to the classified nature of airport security plans, I will direct a member of my staff to make the necessary arrangements for my review of Massport's security plan.

I appreciate your attention to this important issue and look forward to the Department's response. If you have any questions, please have a member of your staff contact Mark Bayer of my staff at 202-225-2836.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Edward J. Markey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Edward" and last name "Markey" clearly legible.

Edward J. Markey